# College students compete in world's first sperm race to raise fertility awareness



In a pioneering event held on Friday in downtown Los Angeles, two college students competed in what has been billed as the world’s first ever reproductive health competition — a sperm race. The contest, devised by a group of tech-savvy teenagers, took place at LA Center Studios, a venue typically known for hosting major Hollywood productions including Dune, Top Gun: Maverick, and Mad Men.

The competitors, Tristan Milker, 20, a student at the University of Southern California, and Asher Proeger, 19, from the University of California, Los Angeles, faced off in a series of microscopic races where their own sperm were raced along an eight-inch track modelled on the female reproductive system. The event was described on the official Sperm Racing website as the “ultimate battle of fertility and fitness.”

Milker emerged as the victor after winning two out of three races, earning a cash prize of $10,000. After his win, Milker told the Daily Mail, “I’m so proud.” Proeger, who had jokingly pledged to use any winnings for a down payment on a new Corvette, had expressed confidence before the race, stating, “My swimmers are strong. They're ready to pump out the greatest guys. And I think we're going to see that tonight.”

The event was the brainchild of three young founders: Eric Zhu, 17; Nick Small, 16; and influencer Shane Fan, 22. Zhu told the Daily Mail that their goal was to raise awareness of male infertility and to destigmatise discussions about sperm, which he noted is often associated with pornography. “We're trying to make sperm much less of a taboo subject, more of a biomarker.”

Zhu, who has a history of entrepreneurial ventures dating back to when he was 13, described the idea as both “crazy” and promising, adding, “If we're able to make it into a biomarker that people could actually improve, we will change the paradigm.” His father, Sam Zhu, a biological scientist, said, “I feel that this kind of idea is crazy but it makes sense as well.”

The race featured sophisticated scientific techniques to preserve and visualise the spermatozoa. Fresh samples were collected shortly before the event, kept at incubation chambers mimicking body temperature, and then placed in a centrifuge to prepare them for the microfluidic two-lane race track. A gentle electric current encouraged the sperm to swim upstream along the course, simulating natural conditions.

The event drew around 500 attendees, primarily college-age, with tickets priced at $20 for students, $40 for general admission, and nearly $1,000 for VIP access. The programme included giant screens displaying the race, weigh-ins, leaderboards, play-by-play commentary, and a half-time show with influencers and YouTubers engaging in on-site interviews.

The race initially was scheduled to take place at the Hollywood Palladium but the venue withdrew support, citing discomfort with the press coverage and placing restrictions on the organisers. Zhu confirmed this development, saying, “They ended up kicking us out of the venue. They weren't happy with us and didn't like the press at all.” The team subsequently secured LA Center Studios as the location.

Supporting the event was Legacy, a clinic specialising in semen analysis and sperm freezing. Stephanie Sabourin, Director of Clinical Services at Legacy, who was present at the event and even appeared on stage in a lab coat, remarked on the serious challenges surrounding fertility. “We're in a global fertility crisis right now,” she said. “As awkward and uncomfortable as it can be, having to have these difficult conversations about things like your sperm and your fertility, go test it. The earlier you identify a problem, if you have one, the easier and faster it is to fix.”

Proeger, an economics major who spent parts of his youth in South Africa and Texas before attending UCLA, expressed the dual purpose of the race: “The race is a great way to raise awareness to make sure men are more fertile — as well as being super entertaining and awesome.”

Audience reactions were mixed. Justin Ramirez, a software engineer who attended with his girlfriend, observed with surprise the youthful demographic and described the event’s visuals as somewhat artificial. Conversely, a cameraman covering the event expressed a critical perspective, calling it “the downfall of society.”

Merchandise such as T-shirts and hoodies commemorating the sperm race were also available for purchase, underscoring the organisers’ aim to normalise and popularise conversations around male reproductive health.

This innovative competition combined scientific insight with entertainment in a novel approach to addressing male fertility, engaging a young audience in a dialogue traditionally surrounded by stigma.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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